

Book Folios

Volume 134

John Wilson Green

71 2709 985 0303



# The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

John Wilkes Booth Relics

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL  
WASHINGTON

April 23, 1931

Mr. Howard K. Terry,  
Bustleton,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Terry:

I am in receipt of your letter of April 22 in which you make inquiry as to the so-called Lincoln exhibits, of which you have read I am the custodian. The exhibits in the trial of the Lincoln conspirators are in my custody as the Chief Clerk and Solicitor of the Judge Advocate General's Office, which office is the depository of all records of trial by military courts. As you know, the Lincoln conspirators were tried by a military commission; therefore the record of trial and the exhibits connected therewith are a part of the official records of this office. The following is a brief list of the more important exhibits in this case:

Small Derringer pistol with which Booth shot President Lincoln and which he dropped in the box at the theatre.

The bullet with which the President was shot.

Small pieces of President Lincoln's skull probed from the wound.

The probe used by the doctors in searching for the bullet.

The dagger with which Booth wounded Colonel Rathbone and which he brandished as he (Booth) ran across the stage of the theatre in escaping.

The pine wood bar with which Booth fastened the door behind him after entering the lobby leading to the President's box.

Booth's keys and necktie.

Booth diary, containing two entries - one of April 14, and one of April 21, 1865 - both relating to the assassination of the President, and in the pocket of which five photographs of different ladies and his comb were found.

Two Spencer carbines carried by Booth and Harold, one of which Booth had in his hand when he was shot by Boston Corbett.

The maps and pocket compass used by Booth and his companion (Harold) in crossing the Potomac.

Whistle used by Booth and believed to have been a signal for the theater lights to be turned out. However, the lights were not turned out.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OCT 15 1957

Mrs. Sally Hensch  
Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mrs. Hensch:

This is to acknowledge your letter of October 7, 1957, regarding a photograph of John Wilkes Booth's spur which is at the Lincoln Museum.

The spur which is in the Lincoln Museum Collection was acquired by the Federal Government with the purchase of the Oldroyd Collection in 1926. We do not have too much information on the spur except that contained and preserved on the label. An account of how it was obtained by Mr. Oldroyd is contained in the Life of Osborn H. Oldroyd by William E. Benham (Washington, D. C., 1927), pages 26-7. We have also been informed that the United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Md., has a spur claimed to have been worn by Booth on the night of April 14, 1865.

We are enclosing a photograph of the spur which you requested. It is hoped that the information above will be of value to you in the study of the spurs worn by John Wilkes Booth.

Sincerely yours,

T. Sutton Jett  
Chief, Division of Public Use  
and Interpretation

Enclosure



Original in safe



original in safe



October 18, 1957

Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Chief  
Division of Public Use and Interpretation  
United States Department of The Interior  
National Park Service  
National Capital Parks  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Jett:

Thank you very much for sending us a photograph of the  
Booth Spur which the assassin is supposed to have worn on April 14, 1865.

We are glad to learn that the United States Naval Academy  
Museum also has a Booth Spur. We have written to them for some information  
as well as a photograph.

Thanking you for your help, I remain

Yours sincerely,

RCM:sh

R. Gerald McMurtry



UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY  
Annapolis, Maryland  
THE MUSEUM

*ask*  
12/2/57

27 November 1957

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
Director, The Lincoln National Life  
Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

In reply to your letter of 18 October 1957 I enclose herewith, compliments of the U. S. Naval Academy Museum, a photograph of the spur alleged to have been worn by John Wilkes Booth the night he shot Lincoln. This spur is apparently of iron painted black. It still has its pointed rowel, but nothing to show how it was attached to the boot.

I enclose the only documentation which we have on this spur. It is only fair to state that the museum in the old Ford Theater in Washington exhibits a spur which they claim is the one lost by Booth that night, and it is completely different from the one in our Museum.

Sincerely yours,

*Wade DeWeese.*

Wade DeWeese  
Captain, USN (Ret.)  
Director

ENC 2

8 May 1951

MEMORANDUM

From: Director, Naval Academy Museum  
To: Public Information Officer, U. S. Naval Academy  
Subj: Spur of John Wilkes Booth presented to Naval Academy Museum

1. When John Wilkes Booth, the actor, shot President Lincoln on 14 April 1865, he leaped from the President's box to the stage. One of the spurs he was wearing caught in an American flag draped around the box causing Booth to fall on the left leg breaking the shinbone. The spur was torn off his riding boot and broke in two pieces. It was picked up by a Union soldier who was attending the play in Ford's Theatre that night. The soldier's name was Samuel B. Ream.
2. Uncle Sam Ream, as he was known to his relatives, was born at the Reem homestead at Rheems, Pennsylvania, in 1845. At nineteen he enlisted in the U. S. Cavalry for the duration of the Civil War. After the war he went to Kansas where he lived the rest of his days. He taught school at Holton, Kansas where Buffalo Bill (Bill Cody) also taught at the same time. Ream and Cody became very intimate friends. He followed the great scout in the circus business for several years but later returned to Holton and entered into business. He never married but spent much of his earnings assisting poor boys, bearing the expense of rearing and educating four boys, all of whom are living but one. The latter was only seventeen years old when Mr. Ream died. The young man mourned his death and is said to have died of a broken heart two weeks later.
3. The above mentioned spur was repaired by Uncle Sam Ream by welding, and was in his possession until 1927 when he died suddenly while attending a convention of the Grand Army of the Republic.
4. Shortly after his death the spur came into the possession of Mr. D. L. Reem (spelling now changed from Ream to Reem), of 107 N. Market Street, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, who on 6 May 1951 presented the spur to the U. S. Naval Academy Museum in memory of his grandnephew, 2nd Lieutenant Robert Dale Reem, USMC, who graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in the Class

(COPY)

8 May 1951

Subj: Spur of John Wilkes Booth presented to Naval Academy  
Museum

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of 1948. Lieutenant Reem heroically sacrificed his life on November 6, 1950, in the Chosen Reservoir sector of Korea by dropping on a hand grenade hurled into a group of his command by a unit of the Chinese Red Army. Lieutenant Reem was instantly killed but saved the lives of his men.

5. S. B. Ream, who picked up the spur in Ford's Theatre, was the great-great-uncle of Lieutenant Reem.

WADE DeWEESE  
Acting

Copy to:  
Chief of Staff

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY MUSEUM  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

21 October 1957

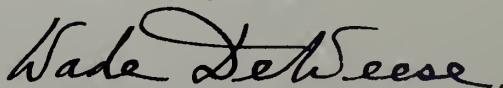
Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
Director, The Lincoln National Life  
Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. McMurtry:

In reply to your letter of 18 October 1957, I will have a photograph made as soon as practicable of the spur alleged to have belonged to John Wilkes Booth and send you a print.

At the same time I will send you the documentation in our possession.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wade DeWeese".

Wade DeWeese  
Captain, USN (Ret.)  
Director



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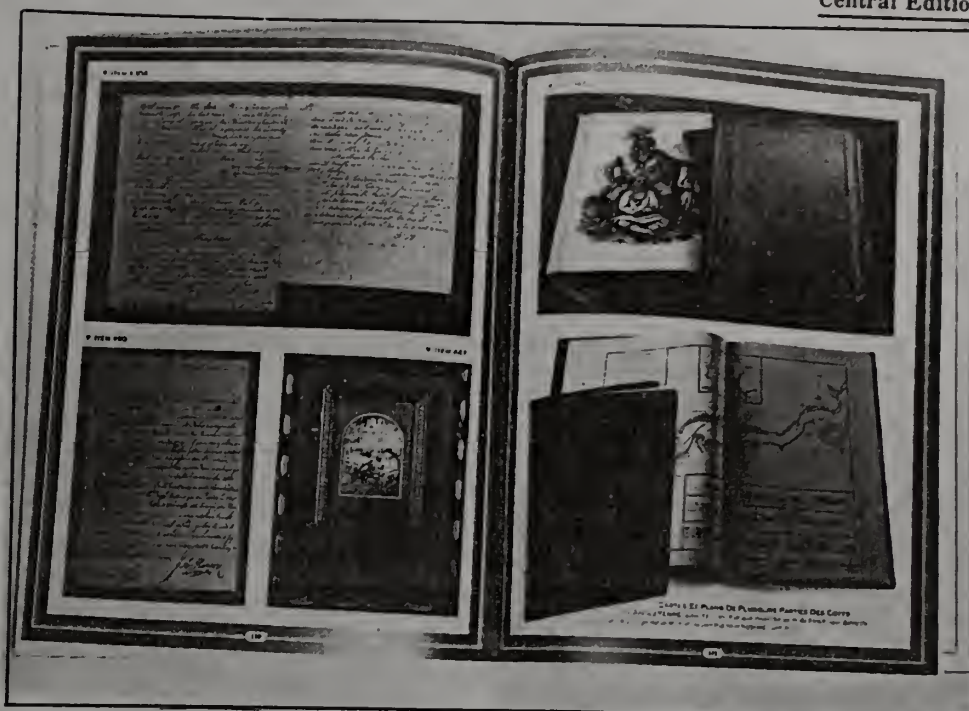
Dealers who sell collectibles by mail-order like to consider their catalogs to be valuable reference works. Seldom do I find one worthy of taking up space on my bookshelves. An exception is the Jefferson Rarities Collection, a 272-page catalog published by Jefferson Rarities, a New Orleans based dealer in rare paper Americana.

The catalog describes more than 700 items that are priced and available for purchase. The table of contents lists sections on historic autographs, presidents, first ladies, antique newspapers, rare books and miscellaneous.

Each page contains detailed notes about the items, many of which are pictured.

Pictured on the cover is a letter handwritten and signed by George Washington to his nephew Bushrod Washington in 1798.

(continued on page 4)



HISTORICAL documents and rare books are pictured in the Jefferson Rarities catalog. The softbound book is 8½ by 11 inches.

## Editor's Notes . . . (continued from page 3)

Because it contains the president's comments on freedom of speech and of the press, it is considered an important letter and priced at \$115,000.

Another expensive document is the only known John Wilkes Booth "conspiracy check" in private hands. The bank check signed by President Lincoln's assassin is framed along with two wood block engravings that appeared in the April 29, 1865 "Assassination Issue" of Harper's Weekly. The price is a hefty \$28,500.

More to my taste — but still out of my league priced at \$2,250 — is an autographed photo of Detroit Tigers outfielder Ty Cobb. The 8-by-10 photo shows "The Georgia Peach" sliding safely into third base.

On the low end are autographed photos of Actress Olivia DeHavilland in her role as Melanie in "Gone With the Wind" and of U.S. Air Force test pilot Chuck Yeager, each priced \$125. A Jimmy Carter signature is priced \$50.

The December 1992 issue of *Autograph Collector* magazine credited Jefferson Rarities with publishing the most elaborate catalog of autographs ever issued.

Whether or not you order anything from this catalog, it's worth the special \$10 price just to see the illustrations and read the informative notes. To order phone (800) 877-8847.





# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS

1100 OHIO DRIVE SW.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242

IN REPLY REFER TO:

APR 11 1974

APR 15 1974

Honorable Jim Wright  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Wright:

Director Walker has forwarded your communication of March 21 in behalf of Mr. John C. Brennan concerning the boot of John Wilkes Booth to us for reply since Ford's Theatre is administered by this office.

Mr. Brennan's letter prompted us to conduct another investigation regarding the controversial inscription inside the left boot of John Wilkes Booth, and we are still unable to confirm the word "Luz" written inside. Because of the faintness of the inscription, in 1948 the FBI was asked to do a laboratory analysis. After examination by them, using the best laboratory techniques of the time, the report indicated that the entire inscription could not be deciphered. Unfortunately, the word "Luz" could not be verified. Doctor Mudd's sworn statement of 1865 also indicates he was not absolutely certain of the inscription.

The solid circle of wood inside the boot was lowered by a museum conservator of the National Park Service. This was done for better preservation and support of the item.

The utmost care is taken in preserving items and only qualified museum technicians are allowed access to articles contained in the exhibit cases. Please be assured that the inscription inside the left boot has not been removed by any person.

Enclosed you will find copies of photos taken by the FBI and a report of their findings. Our entire files on the boot, including correspondence and photos from the 1948 lab analysis, will be made available to Mr. Brennan upon his request.

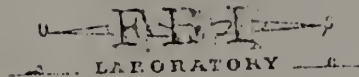
Thank you for your interest and concern, and we trust that this information will help in clarifying this matter.

Sincerely yours

*Manus J. Fish Jr.*  
Director, National Capital Parks

Enclosures

REPORT  
of the



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 24, 1948

To: Mr. Irving C. Root, Supervisor,  
National Capital Parks  
National Park Service  
United States Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosed follows the report of the FBI Laboratory on the evidence listed below which was previously delivered to the Laboratory by Mr. Stanley T. McClure, of your office, on November 24, 1948. This report confirms and supplements an oral report given to Mr. McClure on November 10, 1948.

Re: JOHN WILKES BOOTH  
BOOTH

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover, Director

YOUR FILE NO.

FBI FILE NO.

LAB. NO.

1-56000 EQ

Examination requested by: Addressee

Reference: Letter dated November 24, 1948

Examination requested: Document

Specimens:

E1 Left boot of John Wilkes Booth containing partially legible handwriting on the inside.

Result of Examination:

The left boot of John Wilkes Booth was photographed by the use of ultra-violet and infra-red light in an effort to develop the partially legible handwriting appearing on the inside leather.

While it was not possible to read any of the writing with certainty, it does appear that the top line is composed of three words, the first of which is HENRY. The second line appears to consist of the numbers 405; the third line HENRY, and the bottom line of two flourishing capital letters (probably initials) followed by a word.

Enclosure

Page One

Classified as CONFIDENTIAL

The enclosed photographs may assist you in developing this information further.

The lost was personally returned to Mr. McClure of your office on November 26, 1948.

Page Two  
D-28002 HQ

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 17, 1974

Mr. John C. Brennan  
513 Main Street  
Laurel, Maryland 20810

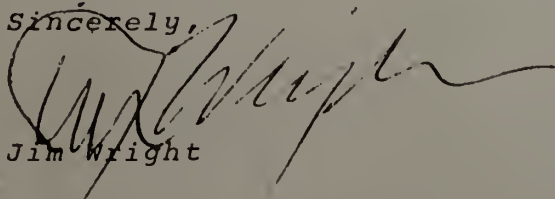
Dear Mr. Brennan:

Thank you very much for your further correspondence regarding the possible motivation of some of the people involved in the Lincoln conspiracy. What you have said certainly raises an interesting idea for speculation as to the intentions of these people.

Enclosed is a letter I received from the Department of the Interior regarding the label in John Wilkes Booth's boot. I hope this information is helpful in trying to unravel the mystery of the label.

It was a pleasure to look into this matter for you. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Wright



May 8, 1974

The Honorable Jim Wright  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Wright:

Thank you sincerely for the time and effort you expended in trying to ascertain why, within the past few years, the name that looked like "Luz" to Dr. Samuel A. Mudd in 1865 and me in 1969 has been abraded from the throat of the boot of Booth at Ford's Theater Museum.

The matter, seemingly, is too trivial to warrant further attention, but in my opinion there would just have to be something in the situation that is being held back from public knowledge.

National Capital Parks Director Fish's letter to you of April 11, 1974, states that Dr. Mudd in 1865 indicated uncertainty as to the inscription in the boot. As you can see from the copy of Dr. Mudd's deposition enclosed, he, like I, had difficulty in deciphering the German script -- whose "Ls" look like "Zs" and whose lower-case "zs" look like "3s?". From another Theodore Roscoe book, a real gem published eleven years after The Web of Conspiracy under the title The Lincoln Assassination (1971), I enclose another excerpt telling of the authentication of the name of the owner of the boot in 1865.

To my suspicious mind, the most positive statement in Mr. Fish's letter to you of April 11 is worded rather strangely: "PLEASE BE ASSURED [are these words synonymous with, "I should like to state categorically"?] that the inscription inside the LEFT boot (?) has not been removed BY ANY PERSON [if removed by more than one person or by a Governmental Agency these three redundant words could possibly be a hair-splitter's refuge]. The RIGHT boot was presumably buried with Booth in Green Mount Cemetery, and I can't imagine why Mr. Fish utilized the adjective, "left."

In view of Dr. Mudd's statement as to the legend he saw inside Booth's boot, I find it incredible to read in Mr. Fish's letter to you: "Because of the faintness of the inscription, in 1948 the FBI was asked to do a laboratory analysis." What the "best laboratory techniques of the time" couldn't pick up in 1948 I had no difficulty in seeing with my own eyes in 1969!

Cordially yours,

Enclosures.

John C. Brennan



# The Binoculars Of John Wilkes Booth Recovered?

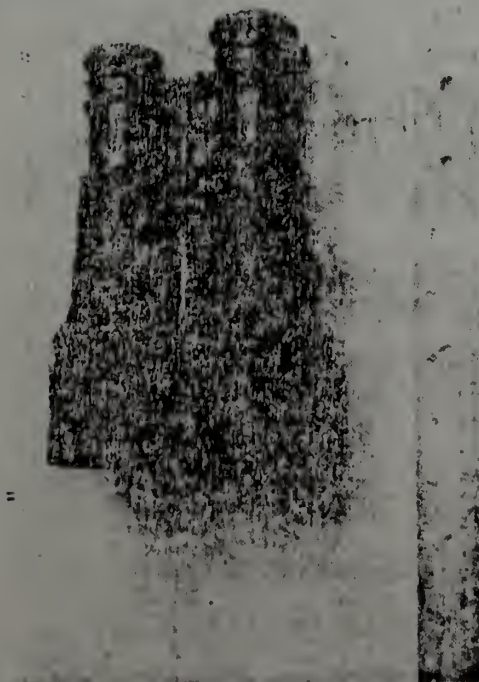
EDITOR'S NOTE: John C. Brennan is a well-established historian and particular scholar on the life and times of John Wilkes Booth.

by JOHN C. BRENNAN

About two hours after he shot President Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth and a companion stopped at Surrattsville tavern.

It was here, according to the testimony of the tavern keeper, that a mysterious pair of binoculars were slipped to the fugitive Booth.

The outcome of Booth is well known, but the story of the field glasses is another matter.



**NOTE** the tiny 'turn screw' at the top of Walter F. Mathers' field glasses. The binoculars may be linked to John Wilkes Booth.

Presently, an unusual group known as the Surratt Society may have located the binoculars — as perhaps one of the few final links to the Lincoln assassin.

Founded in 1975, the Surratt Society now has about 650 members in all 50 states. Headquarters are in the restored tavern where John Booth and his accomplice, David E. Herold, rested after Booth had mortally wounded President Lincoln.

The Society's most audacious projects until recently were all-day excursions

ton and retracing Booth's escape route through Maryland to the Garrett farm in Virginia where Booth died of a gunshot wound eleven days after the President's death.

John M. Lloyd, the heavy drinker who testified at the 1865 trial of Mrs. Mary E. Surratt and several other defendants, swore that a few hours before Booth shot the President, Mrs. Surratt came down by buggy the 13 miles from Washington to the tavern he was leasing from her.

According to Lloyd's testimony she brought with her a wrapped parcel that she instructed him to deliver, along with "shooting irons" and whiskey, to "parties" who would call for them that night. Lloyd further testified that the wrapped package proved to be a pair of field glasses which he did indeed turn over to Booth and Herold when they arrived at the tavern around midnight.

Lending credibility to Lloyd's story was the testimony of a young man named Louis Weichmann, a boarder at Mrs. Surratt's Washington home and a close friend of her son, John. Weichmann testified at the 1865 trial that when he drove Mrs. Surratt down to the tavern on the afternoon of the assassination she took with her a wrapped package measuring about six inches in diameter. Later, after Mrs. Surratt, David E. Herold, and two others, tried by a Military Commission, had been hanged, Weichmann reminisced in his memoirs that Mrs. Surratt had characterized the wrapped package as "glass" and had indicated, without actually coming out and saying so, that the contents belonged to a man who had visited with her just a few minutes before the buggy ride began — John Wilkes Booth.

No mention was made at the 1865 trial (which was far from being a fair one) of finding Booth's field glasses. Reportedly they had been recovered in Virginia and brought back to Washington a day or so after his death by Lt. L. Byron Baker, a cousin of the celebrated, if not notorious, Gen. La Fayette C. Baker.

But in 1867, when Mrs. Surratt's son, John, was apprehended and brought to Washington for trial, the glasses were handed in the courtroom to Byron Baker, who unhesitatingly identified them as the ones he had retrieved in 1865 from the vicinity of Garrett's farm. Baker used the word "peculiar" in describing Booth's binoculars, saying that he had never before or since seen a pair like them.





**CIVIL WAR** enthusiast Walter F. Mathers and his "peculiar" field glasses. A close look at the glasses will disclose the tiny turn-screw near the eyepiece directly above the tip of his little finger.

If that wasn't confusing enough, the contemporary testimony of John M. Lloyd revealed that by turning this thumb-screw, views labeled "field," "marine," and "theatre" would be brought into focus.

With all of this 1865 and 1867 background information out of the way, it will now be in order to recount a recent and related development.

This past summer, when a young Civil War buff, Walter F. Mathers of Glen Burnie, Md., attended a meeting in Maryland of Civil War enthusiasts, he brought with him a pair of Civil War vintage binoculars he had earlier purchased at a gun show.

Fortunately, a highly knowledgeable member of the Surratt Society was in attendance at the meeting, and when this gentleman saw the turnwheel near the eyepieces of the Mathers' glasses he realized that they might possibly be the "peculiar" Booth binoculars that had disappeared after they had been exhibited to the Jury in Washington on June 25, 1867.

Correspondence was promptly initiated with various military authorities, as

well as the Smithsonian Institution, but no worthwhile details were elicited — except that President Grant had owned a similar pair bearing the French markings "campagne" (the French word for "field"), "marine," and "theatre."

A superficial check of various circa-World War I type binoculars showed that all of them were seemingly made in

(continued on back page)

# THE ST. ANTONIO TRADER

(ISSN 0041-2603)

Weekly Antique, Auction & Collectors' Newspaper for Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, western Pa., W. Va., Tenn., Wisc., Mo., N.Y.

Vol. 15, No. 34 (Whole 724) 2nd Class Postage Paid at Cincinnati, Ind. 46146 — Phone 317-345-5133

Delivery, Mon., Nov. 22, 1982

(Within 600 miles)

Nov. 27, 1982





**TAVERN** and house of Mary Surratt built in 1852. It was here at this Surrattsville Tavern that John Wilkes Booth stopped after the shooting of the President. Reportedly the fugitive received the binoculars here. (Site near Clinton, Md.)

## The Binoculars . . .

(continued from front page)

France (the Mathers' specimen bears the imprint "Colmont Ft. Paris").

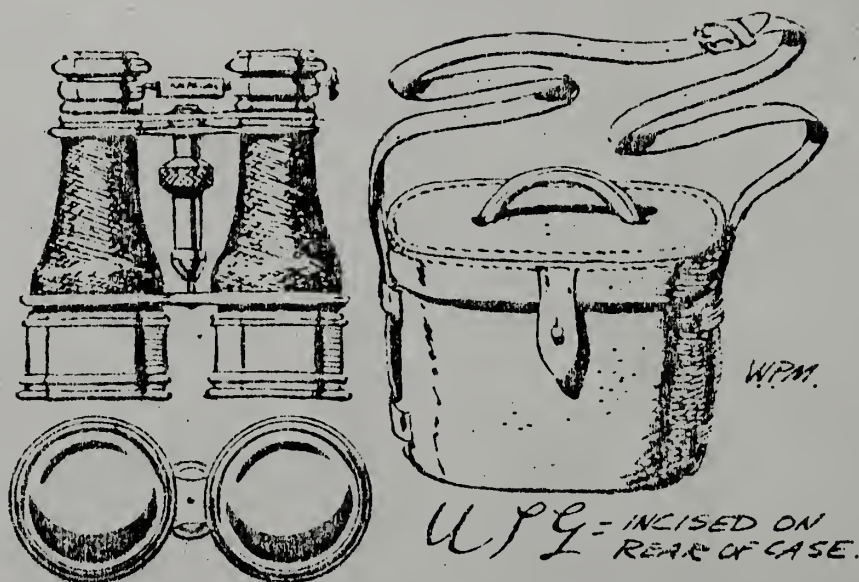
It is obvious that it would be impossible to prove that Walter Mathers' "peculiar" binoculars are the ones that disappeared after being exhibited at the John Surratt trial in 1867. But the intriguing possibility is that they actually could be — despite the probability that dozens, if not hundreds of binoculars like Booth's were made and marketed in the 1860s.

The Surratt Society's recent newsletter contains additional details about the Walter Mathers' binoculars, and anyone wanting a complimentary copy can send a large SASE to the Society at P.O. Box 426, Clinton MD 20735.

The plea made in the newsletter, which

is here repeated is that any antique dealer, museum curator, bird watcher, soldier, sailor, or homebody who has amplifying information will please supply it.

A century-old catalogue, if extant, reciting the name of the manufacturer(s), the place(s) of manufacture, the name of the U.S. retailer(s), the price, the advantages claimed for the revolving lenses over the modern-day fixed ones, and confirming the belief that they were primarily intended for recreational rather than wartime use, would probably provide answers to all the questions assassination buffs, researchers, and historians might ever hereafter raise. All save one: are Walter F. Mathers' binoculars the ones that once belonged to John Wilkes Booth?



FIELD GLASSES (OF FRENCH MANUFACTURE)  
USED BY GENERAL U.S. GRANT DURING THE WAR.

THREE SEPARATE LENS SETTINGS CAN BE  
OBTAINED BY MEANS OF THE SMALL THUMBSCREW  
ON THE RIGHT TUBE; THE SETTINGS ARE MARKED ON  
THE FLATS OF THE SCREW SLEEVE: THEATRE,  
CAMPAGNE AND MARINE.

DRAWING from American Military Equipage, 1851-1872, furnished the  
author by the U.S. Army Military History Institute, shows that Gen.  
Grant had a pair of binoculars very much like Booth's.

### Booth Article

To The Editor:

This note is to thank you for printing the excellent article done by our member, John C. Brennan, regarding "The Binoculars of John Wilkes Booth Recovered?"

In that issue, it was suggested that readers who wanted a detailed description of the binoculars send a SASE to the Surratt Society. We thought that you might be interested in knowing that, as of Dec. 12, 1982, we have received 18 requests for further information. Of course, we also send along membership forms for the Society; so each of these become prospective members.

Thank you again for the help that you have given us.

Laurie Verge  
Editor  
Surratt Society  
Box 427  
Clinton, Md. 20735



September 20, 1989

Mr. Donald P. Dow  
3330 Camp Bowie Blvd.  
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Dear Mr. Dow:

Enclosed are cards and the clay impression. I didn't know what type of oil to use; hence, the impression may be a bit fuzzy. I think the crutch is pine.

Sorry, I don't have one picture of one person involved. Those I have of Ms. Motley are scarce and those of Ms. Rita and Ms. Lucinda are non-existent.

I shall soon send a copy of a tape Ms. Motley made in 1979. You'll need to play it several times unless you find a Caroline County person to translate. We're the close-mouth-edist people when it comes to pronouncing.

When you get the tape, I'll be pleased to know what you think of it.

I believe the church will use your funds to put up a plaque. I'm opposed... flowers would brighten her friends. But I'm not part of that church; that's up to them.

Getting the crutch out of the bank box, connecting with your cards and clay has been a chore I've enjoyed because of honor to MBM. I'd not care to do it too many times.

Respectfully,

James S. Presgraves

bbg

Enclosures

Sept 20. 1989 -

Tracing of Booth's

Crutch fragment which

heiried to me from

Maude B. Motley

from Rita Gray from

Lucinda Holloway

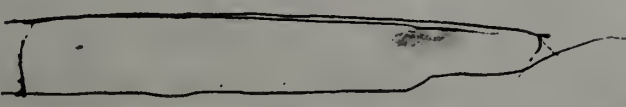
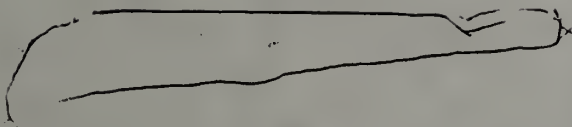
Garrett's sister in law

(wife's sister).

James S. Presgrove

Rural Retreat Va.

End



One side is chanced.

Sept 20. 1989

Tracing of Booth's

Crutch fragment

which heiried to me

from Maude B. Motley

from Rita Gray from

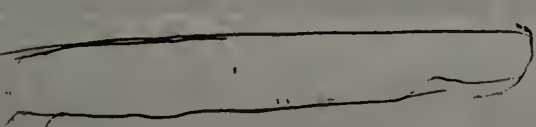
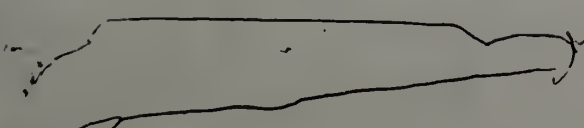
Lucinda Holloway 'Garrett's

Sister-in law (wife's sister).

James S. Presgrove

Rural Retreat Va.

End



One side is chanced -





